



2024 ANNUAL REPORT BEN AVON HEIGHTS BOROUGH COUNCIL

Ben Avon Heights Residents,

This is the 61st consecutive year that your Borough has prepared an annual report.

2024 BEN AVON HEIGHTS BOROUGH OFFICIALS

Name	Position	Term
Scott Dismukes	Mayor	12/31/25
Jason Brown	President of Council	12/31/25
Steven Stiller	Vice President of Council	12/31/27
Joseph Dawley	Councilman	12/31/25
Patrick Lope	Councilman	12/31/27
Jacquelyn Neunder	Councilwoman	12/31/27
Jill Berardi	Councilwoman	12/31/25
Clayton Morris	Councilman	12/31/27
Michelle Dawley	Judge of Elections	12/31/25
Kim Gourley	Real Estate Tax Collector	12/31/25
Jessica DiNuzzo	Secretary	Appointed
Keystone Collections	Wage Tax Collector	Appointed
John T. Vogel	Solicitor	Appointed

2024 COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

Finance	Brown, Stiller, Dismukes
Emergency Services	Dismukes, Neunder
Streets and Utilities	Stiller, Dawley, Morris
Health & Sanitation	Stiller, Dismukes
Greenspaces	Berardi, Lope, Neunder
Insurance	Neunder, Lope
Digital Communications	Brown, Stiller
Allegheny North Tax Collection Committee	Brown, Stiller

Starting in 2023, Council Committees started to feature more than one Council member to encourage collaboration and provide coverage to the areas. Council meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. at either Shannopin Country Club (in the months of April, May, June, July, August, September and October) or the Avalon Volunteer Fire Department (in the months of January, February, March, November, and December.) Starting in 2024, Council established additional Council Working Sessions as well. If needed, these will occur the fourth Tuesday of each month and are at the Avalon Volunteer Fire Department starting at 7:00 PM. Please check the website for an agenda prior to attending. Council encourages all Residents to attend all public meetings.

Our Borough maintains a web site that contains links to Borough information, a list of Borough officials, meeting agendas/minutes, and community events. The website address is www.benavonheightsborough.com.

2024 BOROUGH COMMITTEES

Borough Council wishes to recognize and thank the following residents and individuals who volunteered their time this year to work for the Borough in the following capacities:

Planning Commission	OPEN	2025-2028
	Justin Griffith	2022-2025
	Clayton Morris	2024-2027
Avonworth Community Park Board Authority	Damian Liska	
Avonworth Community Park Board	MaryBeth Bolam	
	Terri Brightman	
	Jennifer Fink	
	Hobie Webster	
Zoning Officer	Tom Price	
Zoning Hearing Board	David Raves, Chair	2022-2024
	Michael Rovitto	2022-2024
	Terrie Brightman	2024-2026
Borough Website Administrator	Jason Brown	
BAH Community Club Chairperson	Michelle Dawley	
Community Club Treasurer	Jen Dickson	
Coordinator Emergency Management	Sgt. Adam Beck	
Deputy Coordinator Emergency Management	Scott Dismukes	
Ben Avon Heights Sustainability Committee	Kim Gourley	

Special Thanks

- Ginny & Lee Hebert, Andy Kolenda & Jessica Opalko- Community Picnic and Sleepover in the Park
- Janel & Travis Everly - Halloween Parade at the Park / Santa in the Park
- Lindsay Pry, Alexis McCune Secosky & the little elves - Borough's Holiday Pole Decoration
- Bill & Jen Dickson - Borough Park Tree Decoration
- Bert & Jen Fary - Easter Egg Hunt in the Park
- Jessica Opalko - Baby Dinner Coordination
- Jim & Leigh Culley - Annual Ben Avon Heights Road clean up

This message certainly intends to include all the others who made this past year's events possible. We are sorry if we missed anyone.

Community Affairs

We welcomed the following new neighbors to the Ben Avon Heights Community in 2024:

- Leila Sears & Rami Laham
- Ward Richardson

2024 FINANCIAL REPORT

Ben Avon Heights Borough is in very good financial health.

We utilize a variety of different mandated funds and accounts for: General Business, Reserve Fund, Sewage Fund, Planning Commission, Sinking Fund, RAD, Road Funds, and Liquid Fuels.

- The **General Fund** account is used for paying all Borough expenditures. Money is transferred into this account during the year from the other accounts to pay for covered expenses for those account purposes.
- The **Liquid Fuels** account is used to construct and repair roads and bridges and pay for related expenses. This funding comes from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) via the state's oil franchise tax. This money is transferred into the General Account to pay for specific aspects of road maintenance at the end of each year.
- The **Budgetary Reserve (RAD)** account is used for investing in libraries, parks and trails, arts and cultural organizations, regional attractions, sports and civic facilities, and public transit. This funding comes from The Allegheny Regional Asset District (RAD).
- The **Planning Commission** account was set up in prior years by the Council to fund the Joint Municipality Planning Program and its associated costs such as legal fees, consultant fees, and other related costs.
- The **Sinking Fund** is required by the state for any municipality that has outstanding bonds or notes.
- The **Reserve Fund** is a fund set up to pay for any unexpected costs incurred by the Borough. These costs include, but are not limited to, infrastructure costs, legal costs, and emergency management costs.
- The **Borough Sewage Fund** is used to pay for the Borough's Sewage Costs including any construction costs required by the state related to the Consent Decree associated with The Clean Water Act. This fund is populated by sewage fees collected from Borough Residents by the Sewage Collection Agency.
- The **Road Fund** was established in 2024 as a means to plan for the long-term funding of the Borough's Roadway Improvement Plan.

All total; at the end of 2024 the Borough had a balance of \$1,421,561 in all of these accounts.

General Fund	\$334,778
Liquid Fuels	\$13,229
Budgetary Reserve (RAD)	\$87,481
Planning Commission	\$23,591
Sinking Fund	\$22
Reserve Fund	\$448,914
Sewage Fund	\$425,533
Roads Fund	\$88,013
	\$1,421,561

For the fiscal (and calendar) year 2024, the Borough had Revenues exceeding expenses by \$142,868. Of this Net Profit, we allocated \$88,000 to the Roadway Improvement Fund the remainder into the Reserve Fund.

2024 Revenues	\$667,913
2024 Expenses	\$525,045
Net Profit (Loss)	\$142,868

Grants

In 2023, Ben Avon Heights Borough was awarded two grants (\$149,000 and \$257,054) from the State of Pennsylvania to improve the quality of its sewer system. These were major wins in our continuing effort to improve the sanitary infrastructure in the borough. In 2024, we implemented Phase I of the Sanitary O&M Project and will utilize the \$149,000 grant for this Phase. We intend to implement Phase II in 2025-2026 and will utilize the second grant.

In 2024, Ben Avon Heights Borough was awarded an additional grant for \$181,000 to improve the curbs and sidewalk on Canterbury, in an effort to increase pedestrian safety and improve ADA access. We will start this project in 2025 and apply this work to the grant.

Revenues

The principal sources of revenue for the operation of the Borough are the real estate tax, at the rate of 7.95 mills, the earned income tax of ½ of 1 percent, and the Sewage fees. Other revenues may be derived from the real estate deed transfer tax and from miscellaneous sources such as fines, interest, permits, and grants.

Real Estate Taxes	\$325,276
Earned Income Taxes	\$165,670
Liquid Fuels	\$14,359
Interest	\$867
Other Income	\$24,367
RAD	\$14,631
Sewage	\$122,743
Total Revenues	\$667,913

Ben Avon Heights Assessed Real Estate Valuation

2015	\$38,889,300
2016	\$38,889,300
2017	\$39,092,700
2018	\$39,375,500
2019	\$40,065,900
2020	\$40,685,100
2021	\$40,875,000
2022	\$42,990,200
2023	\$43,030,500
2024	\$42,989,100

<https://apps.alleghenycounty.us/website/MuniProfile.asp?muni=9>

Expenses

Principal sources of expenses are for general government, emergency services, health and sanitation, infrastructure, and green space.

General Government	\$194,367
Emergency Protection	\$74,764
Health & Sanitation	\$175,085
Municipal Infrastructure	\$23,696
Greenspace	\$34,636
Loan Payments	\$22,497
Other Expenses	\$0
Total Expenses	\$525,045

General Government expenses include insurance, salaries of employees (Borough secretary and Crossing guards), administrative services (e.g., engineering, legal, auditing, planning, tax collection, etc.), advertising and printing, office supplies and other general expenses.

Emergency Protection expenses include payments for Police and Fire Protection.

Health and Sanitation expenses include payments for sewer connections to Ben Avon Borough and Avalon Borough, weekly garbage and rubbish collection, sewer service and maintenance, as well as compliance with the Consent Order concerning the Clean Water Act.

Municipal Infrastructure expenses include resurfacing, repair and maintenance of streets, street lighting, snow removal, signs, salt, supplies and equipment costs.

Greenspace expenses for Greenspace/Borough Park include maintenance of the tennis court and playground equipment, shrubs, trees, and park grounds. Also includes leaf collection. Expenses for the Borough's pro-rata share of Avonworth Community Park.

Debt Service

The Borough currently has one loan which will end in 2026. As of December 31, 2024 the principal amount outstanding was \$32,683.

Contracts

The Borough has contracts for specified services with the following providers:

Police	Ohio Township Police Department
Fire	Avalon Volunteer Fire Company
Legal	Tucker Arensberg P.C.
Engineering	Lennon, Smith, Souleret Engineering, Inc.
Real Estate Tax Collection	Jordan Tax Services
Sewage Collection	Jordan Tax Services
Wage Tax Collection	Keystone Collections Group
Park Maintenance	A&N Landscaping Inc.
Leaf Removal	A&N Landscaping Inc.
Snow Removal	Avalon Borough / PennDOT for State Roads
Road Maintenance	Avalon Borough
PA One Call	Avalon Borough
Refuse & Recycling	Valley Waste Services
Building Inspector	Harshman CE Group, LLC
Code Enforcement	Harshman CE Group, LLC
Auditors	Hosack, Specht, Muetzel, & Wood LLP
Legal Advertising	Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Banking	Northwest Savings Bank

SERVICES

EMERGENCY: 911

POLICE NON - EMERGENCY: 412-259-8304

Police

We operate under a joint municipal agreement for Ohio Township police services which was signed with the Township and covers the period January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2025.

The Ohio Township Police Secretary is our main contact during the day at (412) 259-8304 for routine information. Emergencies, of course, should be reported directly to 911 now operated by Allegheny County at 400 North Lexington located in North Point Breeze. We work with the Ohio Township Police Department, Sgt Adam Beck as our Borough's Emergency Management Coordinator. Scott Dismukes is deputy coordinator.

All residents are urged to keep house doors and cars locked. Please continue to list your homes with the police when you are going to be out of town or away on vacation for several days or longer. House numbers need to be prominently displayed with lighting that allow for visibility from the street.

Fire

Our Borough Fire protection is provided by the Avalon Borough Volunteer Fire Department through a joint municipal agreement with Avalon Borough. Remember to call 911 to reach police and fire dispatchers as well as ambulance service. The Avalon Volunteer Fire Department contract expires in 2026.

Crossing Guards

Our school crossing guards are Jennie-Lynn Knox at Oxford and New Brighton intersection on Monday, wednesday and Thursdays. Jim Hamm on Tuesdays and Friday. Jim Hamm and Jennie-Lynn share the responsibilities at the park bus stop. Nadine Dupechain decided to fully retire at the beginning of the 2024-2025 Avonworth School year. The Borough is still seeking part-time (2), and substitute crossing guards. Please contact the Borough if interested.

Streets and Utilities

Avalon Borough's Public Works Crew patches potholes in the Heights throughout the year, re-lines the streets and crosswalks, maintains the grates of catch basins, and salts the roads within the borough. Please notify the Borough if there are any concerns. PennDot maintains the three state roads that lead into and out of the borough (Perryville, New Brighton, and Ben Avon Heights Road) and can be contacted directly with concerns by submitting a ticket on their web portal (<https://customer-care.penndot.pa.gov/eCCC/eCCC.nsf>). Duquesne Light, West View Water Authority, and Columbia Gas provide most of our utilities and can also be contacted in the event of an outage or water main break.

Recreational Services

The borough Tennis Court is available for residents and can be booked through our online reservation system here (<https://www.benavonheightsborough.com/borough/borough-history.html>) from March through October. A key for the court can be obtained by contacting the borough secretary.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Roadway Improvement

The Roadway Improvement committee ensures the maintenance and safety of our streets, curbs, and intersections. 2024 highlights include:

- In 2024, the borough received a grant for \$181,000 toward the improvement of the curbs and sidewalk on Canterbury, in an effort to increase pedestrian safety and improve ADA access. Evaluation and design work is set to begin in spring 2025 with bidding to occur later in the year.
- For the betterment of intersection safety—especially leading into the bus stop areas—Council budgeted electronic speed signs for the three major ingress points leading into the borough (Perrysville, Ben Avon Heights Road, and New Brighton Rd). Council is working to have these installed in 2025.
- Council worked alongside Kilbuck to establish and approve a joint-municipality plan to resurface sections of Courtney Mill Road. The work is planned to be bid out in 2025.
- A Pavement Inspection and Restoration master plan/schedule was drafted that plans the maintenance of all Ben Avon Heights roads through 2039. By drafting a long-term plan, Council aims to be able to appropriately fund, maintain, and replace roadway infrastructure over the next 15 years.
- As is done on an annual basis, the lines and markings in the Borough were refreshed to promote pedestrian and vehicle safety. Also, the Oxford Bus stop lines were repainted and traffic pylons were replaced.

Health & Sanitation

The Health and Sanitation committee is responsible for the sanitary sewer lines and stormwater systems, as well as garbage pickup and recycling in the borough. Items of note in 2024 include:

- Ben Avon Heights was rewarded two state grants to improve the quality of our sewer system. for \$149,000 and \$257,000. In fall/winter of 2024, the most deteriorated sections of our sewer system were lined to extend their useful life and keep these pipes from failing for the foreseeable future. We would like to thank our residents on Oxford/Banbury/Briar Cliff/Cambridge for working with the borough to make these improvements possible. In 2025, we will move on to Phase II and will use the remaining grant money to fund further improvements.
- During the 2024 sewer work, a partial sewer line collapse was detected on Cambridge on one of the two major outflows from the borough. In December, Council was able to pass emergency funding to remedy the issue.
- In 2024, Ben Avon Heights was one of the first municipalities to complete Phase II of the Allegheny County Health Department's 2004 Consent Decree. The purpose of the 2004 Consent Decree judicial order is to minimize the amount of sanitary sewer waste that overflows into our local streams and rivers during wet weather events. Included boroughs must comply with each Phase by lowering overrun or demonstrating improvement by 2025 or be subject to fines and penalty.
 - Ben Avon Heights borough was categorized as "light blue" or "low infiltration" due to an ongoing maintenance program that measures outside water infiltration into our sewer lines and remediates them on a rotating street-by-street basis.
 - The Borough met our Phase II requirement by passing a new ordinance that requires lateral connecting sewer lines be inspected via CCTV camera at the time of a property sale/closing (PLEASE NOTE: that the review for this process should be factored into closing schedules when selling a property in the borough. More info is here <https://www.benavonheightsborough.com/borough/borough-forms.html>)
- In 2024, ALCOSAN wastewater treatment again passed a 7% increase per thousand gallons of water treated per household (based on water meter consumption) to pay for their own Consent Decree-related capital improvements. The Borough, however, has effectively managed its sewer fund and expenses and therefore did not increase the Borough Rate, holding flat at \$3.00 per tGal.

- Tri-State Pipe continues to clean the storm water system yearly in late November, after all leaves have fallen. A clean, well-functioning storm water system helps preserve our infrastructure and lowers the effects of heavy rainfall/flooding on property in the borough.
- The borough's waste/recycling collection contract with Valley Waste expires at the end of 2025 and go-forward planning for our next contract will begin early this year.

Recreation and Greenspace

Our neighborhood park is the heart of our community—a cherished gathering place where connections between residents are made and memories are shared. The “Dickson Little Red Library” offers a variety of books that pass hands among neighbors. The park buzzes with activity every day, whether its children laughing on the playgrounds, friends shooting hoops on the basketball court, or families enjoying games on the field. Our tennis/pickleball court has become increasingly popular and serves as a reliable source of entertainment in the Summer. For others, the park is just a welcome place to relax, reflect, or walk a pet.

This year, the park hosted several events, including the Easter parade and egg hunt, the always-lively September Community Picnic and Sleepover, and the festive Halloween parade and activities. Thanks to the Avalon Volunteer Fire Department, our young ones were delighted to see Santa, who arrives at the park annually via fire truck on Christmas Eve.

In 2024, Ben Avon Heights Borough Council cared for the park by:

- Contracting with A&N Lawn Service for park maintenance, including grass cutting, hedge trimming, and weeding along sections of Cambridge and Briar Cliff Roads. A&N was also hired for leaf removal at the park and throughout the Borough.
- Contracting with TruGreen for fertilization, weed control, and flea and tick control.
- Planting and maintaining flowers and ferns near the entrance to the park.
- Spreading 100 yards of mulch, with the help of many residents, to enhance safety for children using the swings and playground equipment.
- Continuing our online reservation system for the tennis/pickleball court.
- Displaying a Christmas tree near the entrance to the park during the Holiday. (decorated by Bill And Jen Dickson)
- Replacing worn sections of our playground equipment and swings.
- Contracting with Lennon, Smith, Souleret Engineering, Inc (LSSE) to start the initial phase of our “Park Beautification Plan.” LSSE will engage the community to develop a thoughtful plan for maintaining and updating the equipment, surfaces, and landscape at the park.

We appreciate your ongoing commitment to preserving our unique neighborhood park and will continue working to ensure its vitality and relevance.

Insurance

The Borough maintains Commercial Insurance and a Workers Compensation policy to protect the Borough, staff, park and Council members. In 2024, we worked with HHM Insurors to provide Commercial Insurance through Selective. The policy period began 1/17/24 and was effective until 1/17/25. It included Property, Crime Fidelity, General Liability, Abuse, Public Official and Automobile coverage. We worked with The McGowan Companies to maintain a Workers Compensation & Employers Liability policy through Encova and Summit Point Insurance Company. The policy began on 1/17/24 and was effective until 1/17/25.

Digital Communications

The Digital Communication Committee is responsible for creating the infrastructure and tools to effectively communicate with the Borough Residents electronically.

Last year, the borough developed a Digital Welcome packet for new residents containing materials such as Borough history, contacts, events, and more. If you are a new resident that did not receive this, or a current resident that would like a copy, please reach out to the Borough email.

As Residents like to consume the information via different channels, the Borough maintains a multi-channel communications infrastructure comprising email, a website, and social media.

- The Borough Website (www.benavonheightsborough.com) contains general Borough, Council, and the Community information, history, news, and events.
- Email: The Borough Secretary distributes relevant news and information to Residents via email. In an effort to continue to support the community club and events, this year the borough established a secondary email bahb.communitynotices@gmail.com.
- Twitter @BAHBorough - email distributions are tweeted as well as community news; this feed is also presented on the Borough Website
- Facebook (@BAHBorough) - typically related to Borough Happenings / Community events
- Instagram @BAHBorough - - typically related to Community events

In 2022, the Borough posted Ordinances from the past 10+ years and are no longer constrained on disk usage on the website, making the titles searchable.

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We'd like to acknowledge all of our residents who volunteer to make our small borough thrive—whether it's public service, attending meetings, running community events, working elections, sitting on boards or committees, or simply lending a neighborly hand—our borough would not be as strong and vibrant without your effort, dedication, and support.

We thank you for all that you do for our one-of-a-kind community.

-Ben Avon Heights Borough Council